

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Event Celebrates 60th Birthday of Reconstructed Mission First Celebration Interrupted by Pearl Harbor Attack

Lompoc - On Friday, December 7, 2001, Mission La Purisima State Historic Park near Lompoc will celebrate the 60th anniversary of its reconstruction by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). CCC enrollees labored at the mission site from 1934 until 1942 to create the most historically authentic mission reconstruction in the western United States. Those still living (their average age today is 82) have been invited to return to La Purisima Mission and share their memories of that first ceremony held on Sunday, December 7, 1941, which was interrupted by news of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. At that celebration, one of the event's organizers, noted local conservationist Pearl Chase, was disheartened that the festive atmosphere was dampened by the bombing news that arrived on automobile radios while parked at the Mission. Mission Advisory Committee Chair Christine Palmer said she could "feel the ghost of Pearl Chase helping us to plan this event and welcome the community to the reconstructed Mission just like in 1941."

Cindy Smith, curator of the State CCC Museum in San Luis Obispo will be present with a display of artifacts and photos from that facility. Also, Santa Barbara City Historian Christine Palmer, whose master's thesis at UCSB dealt with the history of the CCC at La Purisima, will offer a slide show and lecture about how the enrollees worked with federal, state and local agencies to reconstruct the mission out of adobe ruins. Fascinating parallels between the original mission construction by Chumash Indians under the supervision of Franciscan padres in the 1810's and the reconstruction by the CCC in the 1930's will be explored.

Member of Congress Lois Capps, State Senator Jack O'Connell, State Assembly Member Hannah-Beth Jackson, County Supervisor Gail Marshall, and State Parks District Superintendent Richard Rojas are all expected to be present to assist in the commemoration.

Prelado de los Tesoros, the award-winning docent organization at La Purisima Mission State Historic Park, and the La Purisima Mission Citizens Advisory Committee, the oldest continuously functioning state park advisory group in California, have worked with State Parks staff to organize the 60th Anniversary Celebration.

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Mission La Purisima has been administered as a State Historic Park since 1942 with educational and interpretive living history programs offered regularly throughout the year by Prelado de los Tesoros (the Keepers of the Treasures). Prelado Chair Genevieve Hutchinson declared the celebration "an inspiration for those of us who love local history and love to share it with our visitors." The Citizens Advisory Committee meets quarterly to assist Prelado and State Parks Staff in policy decision-making.

All residents of Santa Barbara County, especially those who remember the days of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, are welcome to attend the Celebration and enjoy light refreshments. Further information is available by calling La Purisima Mission State Historic Park at 805.733.3713.

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